

# **Protecting Our Water**

## **Information about the new Wellhead Protection Program and ways that you can help protect public water supplies serving the City of Washington and Beaufort County, NC**

### ***The Wellhead Protection Program:***

The City of Washington operates eight public wells to supply water to the City and surrounding regions of Beaufort County. This information package is being distributed to homes and businesses located in or near designated Wellhead Protection Areas. The package provides information about the Program and describes ways that the public can help protect our groundwater resources. The map included shows the locations of public wells and Wellhead Protection Areas. The Wellhead Protection Program is a preventative effort, and is not in response to any problems with the public water supply. The City hopes that you'll participate in the Program by considering the information provided here, and by doing your part to help protect the groundwater resource beneath you.

### ***The Source of Our Water:***

Public wells tap the Castle Hayne Aquifer, a limestone aquifer that supplies tremendous yields of high-quality water throughout Beaufort County. The top of the Aquifer is about 50 to 100 feet deep for the area shown on the map of Wellhead Protection Areas. Layers of clay and a hard caprock overlie the Aquifer and act as a protective barrier against shallow contaminants reaching the Aquifer. Wells that reach

the Castle Hayne Aquifer need to be properly constructed and maintained so that they do not compromise this protective barrier.

***What You Can Do To Help:***

Wells that are poorly maintained or have been improperly sealed can act as a conduit for contaminants to bypass the natural protective layers and reach the Castle Hayne Aquifer. The cartoon diagram included in this package shows how this could happen. The following are ways you can help protect our water supply:

1. Do not use or store materials that could harm our drinking water near wells. Materials of concern include: fuels, automotive fluids, paint, paint thinners, cleaning solvents, fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides. The *Household Hazardous Waste* flyer included in this package has helpful information about ways to minimize, store, and dispose of potentially harmful materials. Used motor oil is accepted at Beaufort County Convenience Centers (garbage drop-off sites). Two Convenience Centers are located in the vicinity of the Wellhead Protection Areas: the River Road Convenience Center (located on Old Magnolia School Road, which intersects Route 32 just north of River Road) and the Five Points Convenience Center (located on Route 32, just north of Five Points).
2. Use North Carolina Certified Well Contractors to construct new wells in accordance to state well construction standards. N.C. standards have very specific requirements regarding minimum distances to potential contaminant sources and proper methods for constructing effective well seals.
3. Keep your well cap securely in place and replace if necessary (well work should be performed by a N.C. Certified Well Contractor). A properly-sealed well cap provides a sanitary seal and helps prevent

well contamination. In the event of a flood or vandalization, a secure, effective well seal is especially important.

4. If you have a well that is no longer in use, please properly abandon the well. North Carolina Well Standards require that wells are properly abandoned when no longer in use. Proper abandonment methods seal the well to prevent aquifer contamination.
5. If you own or operate a business, industrial facility, or farm inside one of the wellhead protection areas, please consider contacting the North Carolina Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance (NCDPPEA). The NCDPPEA is a non-regulatory state agency that provides free assistance to commercial and governmental facilities and operations on ways to eliminate, reduce, reuse, or recycle waste. The NCDPPEA can be contacted at their toll-free telephone number (800-763-0136) or by email (nowaste@p2pays.org). Their website address is [www.p2pays.org](http://www.p2pays.org).

A pamphlet by the N.C. Division of Water Quality (*North Carolina Water Wells*) is included in this package. The pamphlet provides information about proper well construction and abandonment procedures, and includes contact information in case you have questions about North Carolina well standards.

***Thank you:***

Thank you for your interest and participation in the Wellhead Protection Program. If you have any questions about the Program, or would like to know more about what you can do to help, please contact:

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